

# College students soar to new heights

By Eileen Hawley

**A**h, the unmistakable signs of an August in Houston - the heat, the humidity, the 32 teams of college students at Ellington Field - there's nothing quite like it anywhere else.

Ellington Field once again was host to the KC-135 undergraduate campaign, and for three weeks JSC employees worked together to provide a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the participants. From the teams of co-ops who cooked a welcoming barbecue and gave personally guided tours of JSC, to the flight crews who took the "Weightless Wonder" aloft, to the astronauts who inspired the students, and the flight doctors who tended to them, the students got a unique perspective of life at the Johnson Space Center.

"Even beyond the satisfaction of designing and completing a project, this program teaches students the importance of research," said Jasmine Jensen, University of Utah student. "From the day I arrived at JSC, I had a lot of respect for the program and the standard of quality that it upheld. The environment - both the program and the KC-135 aircraft - helps students to make important decisions about their future plans and exposes them to possibilities that we otherwise would not have been aware of."

"We've flown more than 500 students in three years, and our data tells us we're providing a significant educational milestone for the overwhelming majority of them," said Donn Sickorez, JSC education coordinator for the program. "I'm pleased to be involved in a program that gives good students a behind-the-scenes look at science, engineering and the Johnson Space Center."

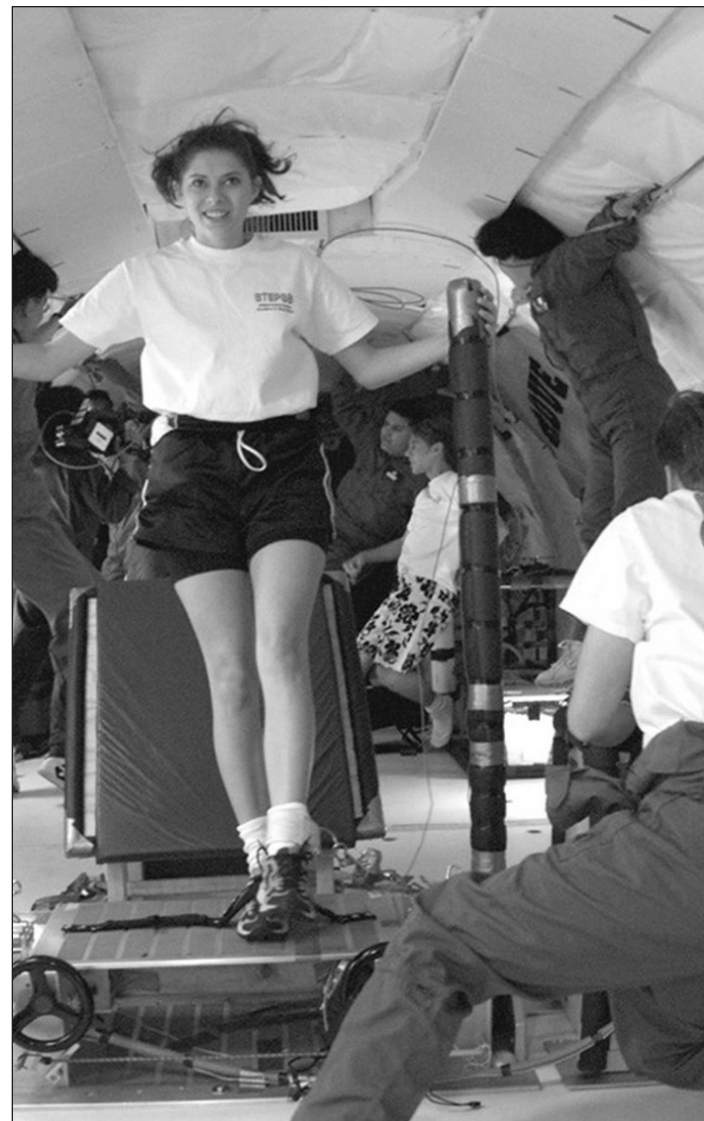
"These students are fun to train, they pay attention, score well on the examination and take the chamber ride in stride," said Mike Fox, Kelsey-Seybold physiological trainer.

"I flew with the University of Maryland in the second week of August," said Florentino Garcia. "I enjoyed the program and learned where engineering can take people. The KC-135 was an amazing experience that opened my eyes to the possibilities that science can provide. I thank all of NASA for an amazing trip. Hope to visit again."

The August flights brought to a close the third year of a program that provides undergraduate students from around the United States with an opportunity to experience the thrill of microgravity and conduct science in a unique environment. Undergraduates fly in March and August. Texas high school students fly in April, and soon, junior colleges will have an opportunity to join in the experience. ■



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***"A wonderful and unforgettable two weeks!"***

*"The KC-135 Zero-G Student Campaign is a great opportunity for teams of students to experience firsthand the rewards and challenges of being a part of America's space program," said Astronaut Bob Cabana. "I had the opportunity to talk with many of the experimenters during their visit to JSC and it was very rewarding. Their enthusiasm and desire to learn and benefit from their experience is contagious. These highly motivated students were eager to share their projects with me on the ground and couldn't wait to get the results from their KC-135 flight. Some approached the flight with minor trepidation after hearing stories about the experiences of some of those who went before them. Once airborne, however, their unbridled enthusiasm was something to behold."*



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